

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF WEST VIRGINIA  
CLARKSBURG

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff,

v.

ARIC J. STUTLER,

Defendant.

Case No.: 1:16CR14  
(JUDGE KEELEY)

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION  
CONCERNING PLEA OF GUILTY IN FELONY CASE

This matter has been referred to the undersigned Magistrate Judge by the District Court for purposes of conducting proceedings pursuant to Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 11 (Dkt. No. 22). Defendant, Aric J. Stutler, in person and by Federal Public Defender, Brian J. Kornbrath, appeared before me on May 2, 2016. The Government appeared by Assistant United States Attorney, David J. Perri. The Court determined that Defendant was prepared to enter a plea of "Guilty" to Count One of the Indictment.

The Court proceeded with the Rule 11 proceeding by first placing Defendant under oath and inquiring into Defendant's competency. The Court determined Defendant was competent to proceed with the Rule 11 plea hearing and cautioned and examined Defendant under oath concerning all matters mentioned in Rule 11.

The Court next inquired of Defendant concerning his understanding of his right to have an Article III Judge hear the entry of his guilty plea and his understanding of the difference between an Article III Judge and a Magistrate Judge. Defendant thereafter stated in open court that he voluntarily waived his right to have an Article III Judge hear his plea and voluntarily consented to the undersigned Magistrate Judge hearing his plea.

Defendant tendered to the Court a written Waiver of Article III Judge and Consent to Enter Guilty Plea before Magistrate Judge. The waiver and consent was signed by Defendant, countersigned by Defendant's counsel, and concurred by the signature of the Assistant United States Attorney.

Upon consideration of the sworn testimony of Defendant, as well as the representations of his counsel and the representations of the Government, the Court finds that the oral and written waiver of an Article III Judge and consent to enter a guilty plea before a Magistrate Judge was freely and voluntarily given. Additionally, the Court finds that the written waiver and consent was freely and voluntarily executed by Defendant Stutler only after having had his rights fully explained to him and having a full understanding of those rights through consultation with his counsel, as well as through questioning by the Court. The Court **ORDERED** the written Waiver and Consent to Enter Guilty Plea before a Magistrate Judge filed and made part of the record.

Thereafter, the parties represented to the Court that there is no plea agreement in this case. Defendant stated in open court that he fully understood he was pleading guilty to Count One of the original Indictment and that no other agreements had been made between himself and the Government.

The undersigned confirmed that Defendant had received and reviewed the Indictment. Defendant waived the reading of the Indictment in open court. The undersigned then reviewed with Defendant Count One of the Indictment and the elements the Government would have to prove, charging him with Felon in Possession of a Firearm, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 922(g)(1) and 924(a)(2). Subsequently, Defendant Stutler pled **GUILTY** to the charge contained in Count One of the

Indictment. However, before accepting Defendant's plea, the undersigned inquired of Defendant's understanding of the charges against him, inquired of Defendant's understanding of the consequences of him pleading guilty to the charges, and obtained the factual basis for Defendant's plea.

The Court heard the testimony of, Special Agent Gregory Perry from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. Agent Perry testified that on May 23, 2016, Defendant, a previously convicted felon, was in possession of an illegally stolen firearm in Harrison County, West Virginia, in the Northern District of West Virginia. He further testified that the stolen firearm was not manufactured in the state of West Virginia and had travelled through interstate commerce.

Neither counsel for Defendant nor Defendant had any questions for the witness but made a few clarifications to Agent Perry's testimony. Defendant stated he heard and understood the testimony of the Government's witness, but stated that on May 23, 2016, he did not sell the firearm but instead traded it for pills. He also stated that he knew he was a convicted felon and it was illegal for him to be in possession of a firearm. The undersigned Magistrate Judge concludes the offense charged in Count One of the Indictment is supported by an independent basis in fact concerning each of the essential elements of such offense, and that independent basis is provided by Gregory Perry's testimony.

The undersigned then reviewed with Defendant the statutory penalties applicable to an individual adjudicated guilty of the felony charge contained in Count One of the Indictment and the impact of the sentencing guidelines on sentencing in general. From said review, the undersigned Magistrate Judge determined Defendant understood the

nature of the charges pending against him and that the possible statutory maximum sentence which could be imposed upon his conviction or adjudication of guilty on Count One was a term of imprisonment not to exceed ten (10) years. The undersigned further determined Defendant understood a fine of not more than \$250,000.00 could be imposed, both fine and imprisonment could be imposed, he would be subject to a period of at least three (3) years of supervised release, and the Court would impose a special mandatory assessment of \$100.00 for the felony conviction payable on or before the date of sentencing. Defendant also understood that his sentence could be increased if he had a prior firearm offense, violent felony conviction, or prior drug conviction. He also understood he might be required by the Court to pay the costs of his incarceration, supervision, and probation.

The undersigned also informed Defendant whether he understood that by pleading guilty he was forfeiting other rights such as right to vote, right to serve on a jury, and the right to legally possess a firearm.

Additionally, the undersigned asked Defendant whether he understood that if he were not a citizen of the United States, by pleading guilty to a felony charge he would be subject to deportation at the conclusion of any sentence; that he would be denied future entry into the United States; and that he would be denied citizenship if he ever applied for it. Defendant stated that he understood.

The undersigned reviewed with Defendant all of the rights that are forfeited by tender of a plea of guilty. The undersigned advised Defendant of his right to plead not guilty and maintain that plea during a trial before a jury of his peers. The undersigned also informed Defendant of the right to be represented by counsel during trial, the right to

confront and cross-examine witnesses, the right not to testify, the right to present evidence and subpoena witnesses and the right to have the Government prove its case beyond a reasonable doubt. The undersigned also noted that the jury's verdict must be unanimous. Defendant stated in open court that he understood all of these rights and understood that he would be giving up all of these rights by entering a plea of guilty. Defendant and his counsel stated that Defendant understood all of the consequences of pleading guilty. Defendant was also advised of his appellate rights.

Defendant stated that the plea was not a result of any threat, coercion, or harassment and that the plea was not the result of any promises. Defendant stated there was nothing he had asked his lawyer to do that was not done Defendant further stated that his attorney had adequately represented him in this matter and that neither he nor his attorney had found an adequate defense to the charge contained in Count One of the Indictment.

The undersigned Magistrate Judge informed Defendant that he would write the subject Report and Recommendation and a pre-sentence investigation report would be prepared by the probation officer attending the District Court. The undersigned advised the Defendant that the District Judge would adjudicate the Defendant guilty of the felony charged under Count One of the Indictment. Only after the District Court had an opportunity to review the pre-sentence investigation report, would the District Court make a determination as to whether to accept or reject any recommendation or stipulation contained within the pre-sentence report.

Defendant also understood that his actual sentence could not be calculated until after a pre-sentence report was prepared and a sentencing hearing conducted. The

undersigned also advised, and Defendant stated that he understood, that the Sentencing Guidelines are no longer mandatory, and that, even if the District Judge did not follow the Sentencing Guidelines or sentenced him to a higher sentence than he expected, he would not have a right to withdraw his guilty plea. Defendant further stated that his attorney showed him how the advisory guideline chart worked but did not promise him any specific sentence at the time of sentencing. Defendant stated that he understood his attorney could not predict or promise him what actual sentence he would receive from the sentencing judge at the sentencing hearing. Defendant further understood there was no parole in the federal system, but that he may be able to earn institutional good time, and that good time was not controlled by the Court, but by the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

Defendant, Stutler, with the consent of his counsel, Brian J. Kornbrath proceeded to enter a verbal plea of **GUILTY** to the felony charge in Count One of the Indictment.

Upon consideration of all of the above, the undersigned Magistrate Judge finds that Defendant is fully competent and capable of entering an informed plea; Defendant is aware of and understood his right to have an Article III Judge hear and accept his plea and elected to voluntarily consent to the undersigned United States Magistrate Judge hearing his plea; Defendant understood the charges against him, not only as to the Indictment as a whole, but in particular as to Count One of the Indictment; Defendant understood the consequences of his plea of guilty, in particular the maximum statutory penalty to which he would be exposed for Count One; Defendant made a knowing and voluntary plea of guilty to Count One of the Indictment; and Defendant's plea is independently supported by Special Agent Gregory Perry's testimony, which provides beyond a reasonable doubt, proof of each of the essential elements of the charges to

which Defendant has pled guilty.


The undersigned Magistrate Judge therefore recommends Defendant's plea of guilty to Count One of the Indictment herein be accepted conditioned upon the Court's receipt and review of this Report and Recommendation.

The undersigned magistrate judge remanded Defendant to the custody of the U.S. Marshal Service, to be returned to the custody of the State of West Virginia pending sentencing.

Any party may, within fourteen (14) days after being served with a copy of this Report and Recommendation, file with the Clerk of the Court written objections identifying the portions of the Report and Recommendation to which objection is made, and the basis for such objection. A copy of such objections should also be submitted to the Honorable Irene M. Keeley, United States District Judge. Failure to timely file objections to the Report and Recommendation set forth above will result in waiver of the right to appeal from a judgment of this Court based upon such report and recommendation. 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1); United States v. Schronce, 727 F.2d 91 (4th Cir. 1984), cert. denied, 467 U.S. 1208 (1984); Wright v. Collins, 766 F.2d 841 (4th Cir. 1985); Thomas v. Arn, 474 U.S. 140 (1985).

The Clerk of the Court is directed to send a copy of this Report and Recommendation to counsel of record.

Respectfully submitted on May 2, 2016

  
MICHAEL JOHN ALOT  
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

